

An Interactive Display for Teaching about Bird Collisions with Windows

Watch Out for Windows!!

Prepare: Read the IMBD fact sheet “The Danger of Plate Glass” (available online in IMBD Press Kit in “Additional Resources” section of www.birdday.org) and the IMBD Collisions Magazine, available in the 2005 Catalog of Products (also in www.birdday.org).

Materials You Need: a framed window with several nails or thumbtacks along top of frame for hanging things, real or fake houseplants, jar of candy/cookies/something yummy; tray filled with commercial or home-made things that can be used to mark windows:

Examples: thin strips of ribbon, a used CD with a string tied around it, window stickers/clings, Window Chalk, Crayola Window Markers, hawk silhouettes attached to/backed with wood or aluminum (so they can be hung with string), suncatchers or wind socks, a piece of soccer-grade netting large enough to hang across window to serve as trampoline if birds fly close

Running the Activity:

1. Display the window with nothing on it, with a houseplant in front and back, and a jar of sweets or something enticing behind. Show how reflective glass can be (reflects back everything in front; birds see reflection of plants and sky and are confused) or how transparent it can be (you can easily see treats behind glass; makes you want to go after them; same happens with birds if there are big plants right behind windows).



2. Encourage participants to take turns adding things to window -- one at a time -- to make the glass more visible, and therefore easier for the birds to avoid. Although all additions should be encouraged, explain that some are more effective than others:

- a) Stick-on objects are only effective for the spot they cover, so they need to be spaced all over the window to work (every 2 inches or so)
- b) Thin strips of ribbon, used CD's, suncatchers or silhouettes on string hung outside are better because they move in the wind, which is more effective than stationery objects
- c) Commercial Window Chalk/Markers (found at craft or toy stores) may be the most fun for kids to experiment with, and would be very effective for birds (although parents may not love them because they cover up the whole window!)
- d) Netting strung across outside of window should be taut, so bird can't actually fly into window; this is an extreme but effective method of preventing collision

3. Encourage participants to try these techniques at home!